

*Amendments to the Claims*

1. (original) A process for the preparation of multiple cross-linked derivatives of hyaluronic acid, which process comprises covalently cross-linking HA via two or more different functional groups, wherein said cross-linking is effected by contacting HA with one or more chemical cross-linking agents so as to form two or more chemically distinct cross-links, between said HA molecules.
2. (original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the functional groups are selected from hydroxyl, carboxyl and amino.
3. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the crosslinking is effected by means of two or more different bonds selected from the group consisting of ether, ester, sulfone, amine, imino and amide bonds.
4. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the cross-linking agent is selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde, divinyl sulfone, a polyanhydride, a polyaldehyde, a polyhydric alcohol, carbodiimide, epichlorohydrin, ethylene glycol diglycidylether, butanediol diglycidylether, polyglycerol polyglycidylether, polyethylene glycol diglycidylether, polypropylene glycol diglycidylether, and a bis-or poly-epoxy cross-linker.

5. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein an ether bond is formed using a crosslinking agent selected from the group consisting of bis epoxides and poly epoxides under alkaline conditions.
6. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein an ester bond is formed using a crosslinking agent selected from the group consisting of bis epoxides and poly epoxides under acidic conditions.
7. (previously presented) A process according to claim 5 wherein the crosslinker is selected from the group consisting of 1,2,3,4-diepoxybutane and 1,2,7,8-diepoxyoctane.
8. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein an ether bond is formed using a gluteraldehyde cross-linking agent under acidic conditions.
9. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the crosslinking of each type of functional group is effected sequentially.
10. (cancelled)
11. (previously presented) A process according to claim 9 wherein HA is first cross-linked via the hydroxyl groups by formation of ether bonds and subsequently cross-linked via the carboxyl groups by formation of ester bonds.

12. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the crosslinking of each type of functional group is effected simultaneously.

13. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 for preparing double crosslinked HA.

14. (original) A process according to claim 13 which comprises:

(a) cross-linking HA via a first functional group and

(b) subsequently further cross-linking the product of (a) via a second functional group, wherein said first and second functional groups represent different chemical entities.

15. (previously presented) Multiple cross-linked HA obtainable by a process according to claim 1.

16. (original) HA cross-linked to a further molecule of HA wherein the HA is crosslinked by at least two different types of bond.

17. (previously presented) Cross-linked HA according to claim 15 wherein the crosslinking bonds are two or more selected from the group consisting of ether, ester, sulfone, amine, imino and amide bonds.

18. (previously presented) Multiple cross-linked HA according to claim 15 in the form of a film.

19. (previously presented) Multiple cross-linked HA according to claim 15 in the form of a gel.

20. (previously presented) HA according to claim 15 which is double cross linked HA.

21. (previously presented) A product comprising multiple cross-linked HA according to claim 15.

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.